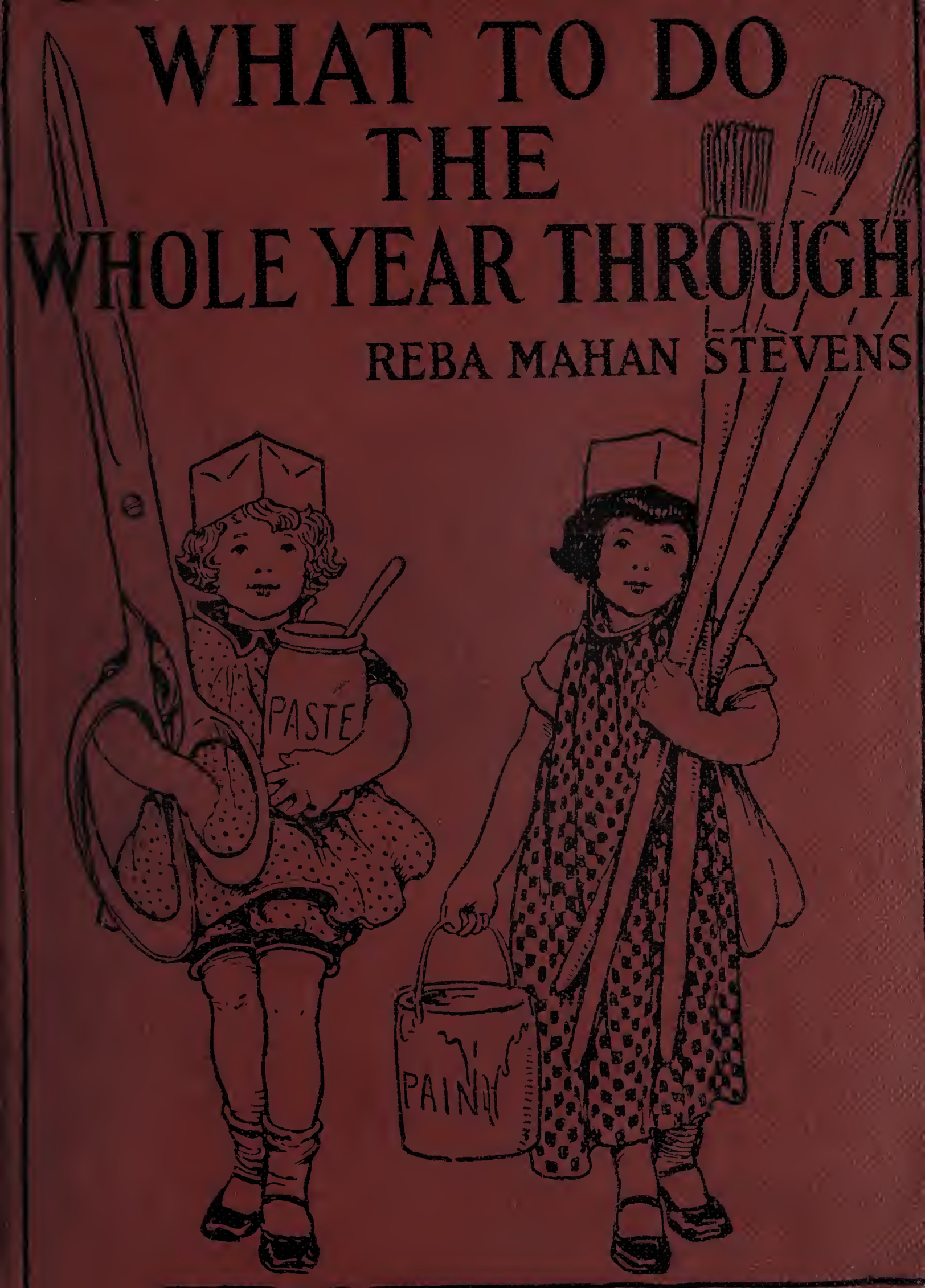
WHAT TO DO THE WHOLE YEAR THROUGH

REBA MAHAN STEVENS



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WHAT TO DO THE WHOLE YEAR THROUGH

TWELVE MONTHS OF HAPPY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

WHAT TO DO THE WHOLE YEAR THROUGH

Twelve Months of Happy Activities for Children

by

REBA MAHAN STEVENS

Illustrated by Florence Liley Young

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.
BOSTON

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What to Do the Whole Year Through

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

APR -8 1929

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TO

MARY AND JANE

FROM

MOTHER

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January
Making a
charm-string

WHAT TO DO THE WHOLE YEAR THROUGH

JANUARY

MAKING A CHARM-STRING

SCRUNCH—scrunch—scrunch, crisp and cheery, every footstep through the snow sang a wintry song to Mary. How she loved it! All the way up the street to Jane's, she reveled in the beauty of the white landscape. For two days the snow had come down, sometimes drifting along lazily in great fleecy flakes, like children loitering home from school; sometimes whirling and dancing in a wild frolic; and sometimes blow-

ing hard and fast before the cold wind, as though they were out on a very necessary errand.

But, this morning, the sun shone over a still, white blanket that sparkled like the diamond dust on a Christmas ornament. Some of the big, square houses looked like immense cakes, Mary thought, all covered with beautiful white icing—and the chimneys, with the soft curling smoke—"Why, they are the candles!" she said to herself, with a short hop of delight. Every post had its white cap; every vine, and branch, and tiniest twig had its neat little covering of tightly packed flakes.

Yesterday, she had seen those flakes through a magnifying-glass. Over and over again, her father had caught them out of the whirling cloud on his dark

coat sleeve, and let her look at them. What a surprise to find that each tiny flake was really what father called a "perfect crystal," and had a pattern all its own, of lines and bars and angles! Except for the darkness coming down, they must surely have missed their supper, for Mary had been fascinated with the business of catching and examining these lovely things.

Every day had so many happy things in it, thought Mary as she tramped along, and, now, ahead of her was another day with Jane, and at least a part of it was to be spent outdoors playing in the snow.

Bundled in warm coats and gloves, what a morning they made of it, doing all the jolly things that little girls know how to do with a January day! The

longer they played, the redder became their tiny noses and the more their cheeks looked like round, rosy apples. And before they came in, the most marvelous snow man stood in the center of the garden with his broomstick arms stretched out, for all the world like a traffic policeman.

Before lunch could be served, every member of the family must take a good look at him from the kitchen window. All during the meal, Mary and Jane kept up a perfect chatter, describing how they had gone about the making of this wonderful creature; but before the afternoon was well started, he had lost his interest for them, and there came the old question, "Mother, what shall we do now?"

"Well, I know one thing you might

do," was Mother's instant reply. "You have thought only of your own pleasure so far to-day. Now why not do something to give happiness to some one else, this afternoon? Why not go next door and visit Mrs. Krum? She doesn't get out much this snowy weather, and I'm sure nothing would make her happier than a neighborly call from two little girls."

"Let's!" agreed Mary who had some very nice memories of this little old lady. There was the time the gingerbread men had been handed out from the kitchen window with a twinkly smile; and the time when baking pans were badly needed in the sand pile, and a supply came from this same window; besides the cunning rag rugs for their doll-houses, done on the front porch one

lovely summer day. So her "Let's!" came with enthusiasm, and it brought the same sort of happy response from Jane:

"Let's do; let's go now and stay all afternoon!"

They found Mrs. Krum sitting in her cozy window, with Pert, the canary, singing in his cage, and Ferdinand, the cat, lying asleep before the fireplace. Oh, yes indeed, a cat and a canary, for Mrs. Krum said there wasn't one single bit of sense in thinking that a cat and a canary couldn't be good friends and live peaceably together—and, after all, there isn't, you know. So Ferdinand WAS sleeping on the hearth and Pert WAS singing in his cage—and Mrs. Krum? Well, a big, ruffly apron covered her lap, and it was full of buttons—buttons, but-

tons, buttons, of every size and kind and color.

"What are you doing?" exclaimed Jane in amazement, as she pulled off her storm boots.

Mrs. Krum's eyes twinkled. "I'm putting some new twine in my charm-string."

"Your what?" and Jane came closer to see what she might mean. "What is a charm-string, I'd like to know?"

"Deary me! Deary, deary me!" said Mrs. Krum. And then she stopped rocking and said, "Deary me!" again. "Can it be, can it really be that a little girl can grow so tall and not know what a charm-string is—and not have one all her own?"

When both Mary and Jane had to acknowledge that they had never even

heard of such a thing as a charm-string, Mrs. Krum said, "Deary me!" again in the most disappointed way. And then immediately her gentle face brightened.

"Well," said she in her brisk way, "we'll start in this very minute to begin your charm-strings—one for each of you, and I shall have the honor of putting on the first buttons."

While she busied herself getting them each a length of fine, stout cord, she went on to tell them that, of all the dear things of her little-girl days, nothing had given her more joy than her precious collection of buttons, gathered here and there from aunties, and grandmothers, and other friends, which she called her "charm-string."

"Why, we used to count our buttons every night; and every morning at

school, there was great rivalry to see which girl had the most and the prettiest on her string. It was one of the very nicest things we did for amusement, during the long winter months indoors. You see, we used a great many buttons on our dresses in those days—whole rows of them down the front, and whole rows of them down the back. Even little girls had their dresses buttoned from neck to waist behind with buttons set quite close together—and we wore our hair in long braids, too." She paused to look back to her schoolgirl days with the sweetest smile and the twinkliest eyes.

"Didn't your hair get caught on all those buttons?" asked Mary.

"It surely did," laughed Mrs. Krum. "Oftentimes, at night, we found wisps of hair around the buttons. Wasn't it

queer that, if we were going to wear long hair, no one thought to put the buttons in front where they wouldn't bother?" and she smoothed Jane's shiny black bob admiringly.

Such a store of buttons Mrs. Krum had, saved from many a cast-off garment. She brought out more than one box of them, and they went through them all, turning and handling the pretty things with glad cries of excitement and admiration. Buttons, buttons, buttons, of every kind! Glass ones of every color, clear and shiny; lovely velvet ones; gold ones with delicate tracery cut into their bright surface; some made from metal with a dog, a bird, and even a house stamped into their centers; glittering jet, cut so that they had the sparkle of black jewels; round and square; thick

and thin; tiny, tiny ones that looked too small to be of any service, and great ponderous ones that seemed too large for use. Red ones, green ones, blue ones, black, gold, purple—buttons, buttons! And what was still more delightful, stories, it seemed, went with them all. This one had been to a grand ball; that one had adorned a velvet gown that had watched a President ride by; the scarlet one had gone to the opera; and the delicate white one had graced a wedding gown.

Then and there, two charm-strings were started, and two little enthusiasts began making plans for their explorations in search of buttons. Before another week was ended, charm-strings were the most popular thing in the neighborhood. Every mother, or auntie,

or grandmother who had a stock of buttons, found herself answering the doorbell, over and over again, to meet the eager question from some small friend, "Would you please give me a button for my charm-string?"

Jane's father said it seemed to him the whole neighborhood was playing, "Button, button, who has the button?"; Mary's father said he was glad the buttons on his clothes were plain bone ones, or he might be teased to part with them; Mrs. Krum told Pert, the canary, and Ferdinand, the cat, that she had always known lovely things never grow old nor lose their charm; and a dozen or more little girls carried their treasures about in boxes and told each other that they were never, never going to part with their precious charm-strings!

February
Making
paper dolls

FEBRUARY

MAKING PAPER DOLLS

DADDY had read from the morning paper, at the breakfast table, "Variable weather." It seemed a pretty big word to Jane, but when Daddy told her it meant another day such as the one before had been, she nodded her small head wisely.

"Oh yes, it means changeable," she ventured, "I see!"

And the weather man had been exactly right. The day had indeed been variable! It started out with a fog that lay like a beautiful, gray blanket over everything, and made the houses and

trees look soft, and shadowy with hazy, uncertain outlines. After a time, the fog lifted and out popped the sun. But, before long, the wind whisked up some clouds and chased the sunshine away. Then came a hard, splashing shower that presently ended as suddenly as it had begun. After that, the wind again, then wild little flurries of surprised snowflakes, and more blustery wind. Variable indeed!

But inside, Mary and Jane had been as happy as two busy bees tucked snugly in a warm hive. The doll-house had been dusted and cleaned from top to bottom, all the rooms had been entirely re-arranged and set in order, and now that lunch was over and they had finished helping Mother with the dishes, they stood arm in arm, looking proudly at the

doll family. How primly they all sat about the wee rooms—the mother at the tiny piano playing a tune that not everyone could hear; the father, stiffly erect on the red plush couch; up in the nursery, two very pink celluloid babies tucked up in a pasteboard cradle; at the door, a huge dog; in the kitchen, a pink-faced maid, standing beside the stove watching a rather dusty egg cook in its pan. Everything seemed to be as correct as could be wished for in any well regulated doll family. Plainly, there was no more that two little girls could do there.

The afternoon looked rather unpromising. Valentine Day had taken a great deal of preparation, and there had been long hours of working together with lacy paper and red hearts. But that was

past, and all the gay things that went with it were tucked away. Washington's birthday had been a busy time, what with getting ready for their play about Betsy Ross and the first flag, and then giving it in the big front room before an audience of mothers and baby sisters and brothers. But now the cotton wigs and flowered skirts were folded away upstairs. There seemed nothing special to interest them—nothing to be done.

Big Sister sat before the crackling hearth-fire, and in her lap was a huge pile of fashion magazines. Jane and Mary knew very well that she was hunting for a way to make her new dance frock, and once in a while they peeped over her shoulder to see some pretty thing which she exclaimed about.

Finally—"What shall we do now?"—

out popped the question, the old, old question. And when Big Sister had heard it several times, and each time in a more discontented tone, she put down her magazines and asked, "Did you ever try paper dolls?"

"Oh yes," they told her—they had a whole family that Jane had bought with her birthday money.

"I know about those," said Big Sister," but I mean the kind you make yourself out of ladies cut from fashion pages."

"No," they said, but it came so half-heartedly that she saw there was not much interest or enthusiasm back of it. So, forgetting herself and her own plans, she came to their rescue and, while the wind and rain and snow did all sorts of queer things outside, two little little-

girls and one big little-girl were soon absorbed in the business of making a marvelous array of fashionable ladies.

First, they begged Mother for some pasteboard cartons that had held breakfast cereal. How lucky that Mother had thought to stack them away! But, well, Mother knew that there was always a chance of some one needing cardboard around a house where lively little girls played. Next, from old magazines, they chose their ladies, and these were roughly torn out and pasted onto the cardboard. After that, they were cut out carefully. Big Sister told them she used to press them between books to make them quite flat and dry, but she had thought of a better scheme, so she took them to the kitchen and ironed them out. There they were, as stiff and

nice as any dolls they had ever bought, and "My! what a lot of them we can make just for nothing!" piped Mary.

"We need a lot of them," said Big Sister," because some of them are to have their clothes glued on."

That sounded rather queer to Mary and Jane but, after one had been dressed, they were fascinated with the result.

"Oh, the darling, darling thing!" exclaimed Jane.

And "Isn't she dear!" came from Mary.

Big Sister had chosen a strip of filmy lace for a skirt and, after gathering it at the top, had pasted it fast to the paper doll. Around the waist-line, she had draped a bit of a scarlet silk sash, and, at one side, placed an ornament made from some tiny scraps of ostrich feather. One

plain piece of lace was drawn around the figure for a waist and pasted down on the back, then wee shoulder straps were fastened in place.

"It doesn't much matter how the back looks," she laughed. "At least, it never did to me, because I kept this kind all pasted in a big book."

"This kind? Is there still another kind?" was the excited inquiry.

"Indeed there is! I made boxes and boxes of dresses to take off and put on some of my dolls. Guess what I made them of?" was her mischievous question, as she looked through their pieces for just the gayest bit of ribbon to be found.

"Paper!" was their adventurous guess.

"Yes, paper, but you would never

imagine what sort of paper, so I'll have to tell you. Wall-paper!"

"Oh, we have a whole book of that—the old sample book the man gave Mother!" and Jane flew to bring it from its hiding-place.

"It makes the dearest dresses, because there are so many different designs and colors. You can make dozens and dozens of them, and have no two alike," Big Sister said, as she deftly made them a pattern, doubling the paper, cutting it into the shape of a dress, and leaving a square neck opening to slip over the doll's head. The bottom of the skirt, she cut into scallops and, above these, she made a tiny lace-like trimming by punching rows of holes with a knitting-needle.

The second gown had a deep border at the bottom, made from the edge of a lace-paper doilie; while another was decorated with tiny gilt stars left over from Christmas-package time. More than one of them had sashes of ribbon that could be tied about to hold them in place.

Big Sister left them with their models and went back to her own fashion planning, and, fresh from the designing of these small costumes, in no time at all she had worked out a way, "a perfectly darling way," she said, to make into a frock the lovely peachy silk Mother had helped her choose.

And oh, as the afternoon went by, such beautiful, beautiful gowns as were made for the small paper ladies. Such stacks of wall-paper dresses, such num-

bers of ladies to be pasted into books later. Billowy skirts of soft silks and laces, ornaments of tiny flowers and spangles, strings of fairy-like beads hung about their necks and bits of sparkling things fastened on as slipper buckles. Sometimes a hat was added by winding a strip of velvet around the head and fixing on a speck of feather or flower. They found there was just no end to the things they could do in outfitting such ladies and, long before they were ready for it, the darkness was coming down, and it was time for Mary to go scampering home to her own fireside.

With her dolls tucked snugly in her big pockets to keep them safe from the blustery wind and the few stray drops of rain that still came splashing down

sometimes, she went dancing around the corner, waving a loving good-by to Jane, and down, down the street, happiness behind her, happiness waiting in front of her, and happiness deep in her own little heart.

March
Building a home
for Jenny Wren

MARCH

BUILDING A HOME FOR JENNY WREN

ROUND and round the block Jane and Mary had gone, on their roller skates, thoroughly in love with the blustery March morning. The wind which was whipping, and flapping, and banging, and chasing, and scurrying everything below, and rolling great, gray clouds across the blue sky above, had blown roses into their cheeks, and blue into their eyes, and finally sent them tumbling joyously into the library for a rest. As they sat munching their big, red apples, from the basement just beneath them came a

"tap-tap, tap-tap-tap," and then sometimes a quiet, happy whistling.

"What is that tap-tapping down there?" suddenly asked Mary.

"Oh, that's Daddy. He's at home this Saturday, and he is making a bird-house. I forgot—he said he wanted us to come down and see it." And up jumped two little girls and went racing down the stairs as fast as their legs would carry them.

Father was at his work-bench, and sure enough, he was making a wonderful house, so large that Mary exclaimed, "Why, that looks like a doll-house! It isn't a house for birds, is it?"

"Yes," Father told her, "it is a bird-house, but not for just one family. It is a martin house, and martins live in colonies, or families, so we have learned to

build their homes somewhat like little apartment buildings."

Then he waited patiently while they looked into each tiny window, and inspected every small room.

"My!" said Mary, as she ran her hand lovingly over the neat little porch roof and the wee pillars which held it in place. "My! it must be a lot of fun to build bird-houses!"

"That's just what I think," agreed Jane. "Don't you wish we were boys? The boys at school are all building them. They are going to have an exhibition, next week. But girls can't build even bird-houses, I guess."

Father looked up quickly at this discontented remark, and smiled at his small daughter. Then, suddenly, he laid his hammer down with a bang, and said,

"Whew! I've just been struck with a great big idea! Look here! I don't see why girls can't make bird-houses just as well as boys can. Would you like to try it?"

"Yes! Yes!" they chorused, throwing their arms tightly about him.

"May we really?" demanded Jane.

"When may we do it?" questioned Mary.

"Why not do it this very forenoon? You see, it isn't long until the birds will be coming back to us, and they like to find plenty of houses ready to choose from. I imagine they like to feel that we have been looking forward to their coming and have been getting ready for them."

"The way we do for company," suggested Jane.

"Exactly!" was Father's reply. "And now, if you really want to make some bird-houses, what kind will it be, I wonder? Every bird wants a certain style of house, you see, just as every bird builds a different kind of nest."

"I love Jenny Wren," said Mary, "and I'd like to build a wren-house. My Auntie has a wren-house close by her kitchen door, and when I was there last summer, and swung in the hammock, Jenny flew back and forth feeding her babies and didn't mind me a bit!"

"That's exactly like Jenny Wren," laughed Father. "Of all the song-birds we have, she is the most friendly and trusting. She dearly loves to be near people, and sometimes she builds her nest in the oddest places—in the pocket of a coat which has been left hanging on an

open porch, in a basket, or a box. And I have even heard of a wren's nest which was built in the hat of a scarecrow. How about it, Jane, do you want to build a house for Jenny Wren, too?"

"Of course, that's the very one I want to make," was the eager reply.

"Very well, then," Father said, "we'll start at once. And now, tell me," he went on, in a most businesslike manner, "what did Cinderella do when the old godmother told her to go into the garden and fetch a pumpkin?"

"She went," replied Jane, and Mary added promptly, "And she didn't ask why!"

"Fine! You have the idea," laughed Father. "Well, first of all, take an old basket and go up to the next block where the workmen cut down that big

elm last week. Gather up all the large pieces of bark that your basket will hold, and bring them here."

The basket found, two little girls went away, in great excitement, on their mysterious errand. When they returned, and dumped the pieces of shaggy bark on the basement floor, Father asked again, "What did Cinderella do when her godmother sent her for the mice?"

"She went right away," again answered Jane.

"And she didn't ask why," finished Mary.

"Good!" and giving Jane a coin, he went on, "Now you are to go over to Mr. Bowman's ice-cream store on Main Street, and buy four two-quart containers—the round ones he puts our ice-cream in, nowadays. We could get some

oatmeal boxes from Mother, perhaps, that would be the same shape, but Mr. Bowman's containers are waxed and will keep dry more easily."

True to their agreement, Jane and Mary went skipping away without asking a single question, but wondering very much what these things had to do with building a bird-house. Back again with their purchases, they found Father quite ready to help them get started with their work.

First, in one end of each container, he cut a circular hole about the size of a quarter.

"Jenny is a very tiny bird," he told them. "We must make the opening just large enough for her to go through comfortably, but not so large that another bird might be tempted to make use of

her home. You are each to build two houses, and now you are ready for your part of the work."

"Oh, we are going to make two!" repeated Jane. "Why, Daddy, why are we going to make two?"

"Because Jenny raises two broods each summer, but she does not use the same nest for both of them. Even before her first babies have learned to fly, she starts getting the new nest ready for the second brood. So you see, we must provide another nesting place close by, if we want to keep her near us for the whole summer."

It did not take Father long to explain this simple little house to them. The bark was to be laid carefully around the container so that its surface should be entirely covered, and then tied firmly in

place with strong cord, wound around each end and the middle. The bark was cut several inches longer than the container so that Jenny might enjoy a tiny porch in front, a shelter to keep out the rain.

While they worked, and Father put a few finishing touches on his martin-house, he told them some things about Jenny Wren that made them love her more than ever.

"You've heard her sing, of course, haven't you?" he asked. "Her song is a beautiful one—so loud, and clear, and bubbling over with happiness that, when we hear it and then look at the tiny singer, we wonder how she does it."

"I guess her happiness is bigger than she is," was Jane's solution, to which Father agreed.

"I suppose that girls who are in the Fifth Grade know there are reasons for wanting the birds here, other than simply because we love their songs. You know they eat the insects which destroy our fruit and grain, don't you? So they really help to grow the things which we use for food. It does seem to me, too, that after they have helped with our harvests, we might take a little more care to see that they have food at all times of the year. We used to think the birds went south in the winter on account of the cold, but we have learned that it is more because they cannot get food enough to eat here during those months."

"If we put out food for them, would they stay all winter?" questioned Mary, as she tugged away at tying her heavy cord in place.

"Very likely many of them would. Some of them stay now, where thoughtful people keep food out for them in sheltered nooks. But what fine workmen you are—why, your houses are all but done."

Indeed they were all but done. Four little barrel-like affairs they were, looking, in their coats of bark, for all the world like pieces cut out of the limb of a tree. All that remained to be done was to tie long pieces of the strong cord to each end for hanging them.

"There!" said Father, as the last knot was tied, "who says girls can't build bird-houses? All we need to do now is to find a safe place, hang them up, and wait for our little friends to look them over. We all have any number of friends who walk about on two feet. I think it is

a good thing to have some friends with wings, don't you?"

Mary could hardly wait to get her treasures home for her mother to see, and as she went hippety-hopping down the street with one dear little house under each arm, she sang to the March wind a song she had known since kindergarten days:

"Little brown sparrows,
Flying around,
Up in the tree-tops,
Down on the ground,

"Come to my window,
Dear sparrows, come!
See! I will give you
Many a crumb." *

* From "The Sparrows" in *FINGER PLAYS,* by Emilie Poulsson. Published by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

April
Easter-egg
dolls

APRIL

EASTER-EGG DOLLS

SKIPPETY-HIPPETY, hippety-skippety, up the street went Mary, on a rainy spring morning. It was Saturday, and she was on her way to Jane's.

She had no idea what they would do to-day to have a good time. And when she was inside, quite dry and ready to play, she found that Jane had no plans, either.

"Shall we play school?" asked the small hostess.

But no, it seemed that neither of them cared much about playing school this

morning. The doll-house, too, appeared to have lost its charm for them. Drawing and coloring were tried and put aside. Big Sister was at work in the kitchen, and when the warm, sweet smell of ginger cookies drew them there, they grew more cheerful. But the cookies having been eaten, the question arose again, "What shall we do now?" and they carried their problem to Mother who was busy at work up-stairs. Just what she was doing, Jane did not know, but she had been told that they might come up whenever they wished.

"What shall we do now, Mother?" was the rather petulant question which Jane brought to the door of the sewing-room.

Mother looked up from her work and smiled gayly at them.

"Well, first of all, and right this minute," she said, "you might come in and see what I am doing."

Mother's table was cluttered with all sorts of things—scraps of silks and velvets, bits of lace, feathers and flowers, gilt cord, lengths of ribbon, yarn, and floss, a box of paints, and, what seemed strangest of all, a box of whole eggshells.

Jane took one up in her hand.

"Oh, how light and funny it feels!" she piped. When Mary lifted it, she giggled, "Why, it doesn't feel at all!"

Mother explained how she had taken the inside part of the egg out without breaking the shell.

"Well, I did break it a little, you see. Here on the small end, I made a tiny hole with a darning needle. All winter, I have

been saving them. Whenever I did not have to keep the white part separate from the yellow, in cooking, I made an opening like this, and shook gently until the inside part all came out. Then I washed the shell carefully inside and out, dried it, and put it away to wait for this very day.

"What are you doing with them?" questioned Mary.

"Making Easter-egg dolls," Mother told them. "And having such fun doing it!"

Then she showed them the finished dolls which she had put carefully away in a dresser drawer, dolls of all sorts—a fashionable lady with sweeping plumes on her picture hat, a grandmother whose snowy hair was made of cotton, George and Martha Washington, a college grad-

uate in cap and gown, a young girl with a bit of fur about her neck and a fascinating hat of gold lace, a baby, and a funny clown with his tall hat made of paper.

Such excited little admirers! Such oh's and O my's! Such tender handling of the fragile little beauties.

"They are for Big Sister's luncheon favors," they were informed. "Do you think her club sisters will like them?"

"Oh, how could they help liking them?" was the enthusiastic reply.

Mother said she hoped they would enjoy having them as much as she was enjoying making them.

"I feel like Jenny Wren, the doll dressmaker in one of Charles Dickens' stories. Do you know about her? No? Well,

then we have a story waiting for us this afternoon, haven't we?"

She was turning back to her work when she stopped suddenly and said, "I wonder if you wouldn't like to be doll dressmakers, too? Would you like to make some dolls for yourselves?"

Shining eyes and hops of delight told her their answer, even before Jane exclaimed, "Oh, wouldn't it be fun! I'd love to! But could we? I don't believe we could ever make such pretty ones as yours."

"Perhaps not quite so perfect as mine," Mother made answer, "but I am sure you could make some very nice ones."

The sewing-table was brought out, and, seated within easy reach of all things that might be needed, two happy

little girls were soon busy at work.

First, with a pencil, Mother sketched on each shell, eyes, mouth, and two dots to serve as a nose. Then these were painted with the water-colors—blue eyes, red lips, brown nose and eyebrows, while the cheeks were tinted pink. They were delighted to find how quickly the paint dried, so there was no tiresome waiting.

Mary decided to make a baby doll, and Jane thought she would try an old-fashioned schoolgirl. Both used soft brown yarn for the hair, and both made bangs of it, pasting it to the top of the shell, patting it down into place, and trimming it off even.

Jane made braids for her schoolgirl, and fastened them to the back, letting them fall over each shoulder. Out of a

piece of silk stocking, she made a stocking cap which she slipped on, and as she looked at it, somehow she couldn't help thinking of the picture of Mother, upstairs, taken when she was a little girl, too.

Mary fashioned a bonnet of pink crêpe paper for her baby doll by pasting a strip to the head and flaring it out into a wide frill about the face. Both heads were next fastened with sealing wax to pieces of stiff cardboard, three inches square.

Jane put a little scarf of plaid woolen goods around her schoolgirl, while Mary wound a length of crêpe paper about the baby's neck, and tied it into a big bow under her chin.

"Beautiful!" was Mother's exclamation, when they were held before her for

inspection. "Now that you have started, I suppose you will want to make dozens of them. And there is no reason why you shouldn't. I think it is great fun, don't you?"

"Heaps and heaps of fun!" was what both little girls called it.

And when Mary went home, skippety-hippety, hippety-skippety, down the street, she went just a bit more carefully than she had come, for in a box she carried her baby egg-doll and some extra shells and scraps of lace and silk which Mother had given her.

This story originally appeared in "The Christian Science Monitor."

May
May baskets
E. LILEY·YOUNG

MAY

MAY BASKETS

FOR a whole week there had been so little to remind any one that the beautiful month of May was close at hand that neither Jane nor any of her little friends had given it a thought. When little girls paddle to school in the morning through splashy puddles of water, and come skipping in out of the chilliness at night to play beside an open hearth-fire, there is small chance that they will be thinking much of May blossoms or May baskets.

But, deary me, on the last day of April the sun popped out from behind the

clouds which had been hiding him, as warm and friendly as though he hadn't minded them at all. Father quite forgot to build the hearth-fire, and Mother brought out a gingham dress for Jane to wear to school. Doors and windows were thrown open, and smiling people went about telling one another what a lovely morning it was, and that spring had really come at last.

All the day was filled with pleasant things, it seemed. Jumping ropes came out from closets; roller skates clattered up the street carrying flying boys and girls; marbles were everywhere; and on the boys' playground, there was a great shouting and running about with any number of balls and bats.

Such an exciting day it was! And the excitement was by no means over when

Mary and Jane came scampering up the street in the evening after school, and spied Mother sitting on the front porch.

"Mother, Mother, what do you think!" called Jane, even before they were in the yard. And then, flopping down on the top step, she poured out a perfect jumble of information:

"We are going to have a May-pole—Mr. Ford says the ground is dry, and he is setting up the big pole on the play-ground. They hadn't done anything about it before, because they thought it might keep on raining and then we would all be disappointed. Miss Johnson read us about the things they used to do in England; they had a May queen and a pole—maybe we'll have a queen, too—and they arranged a program this afternoon, and Mary and I told them we

would do something—Mother, what shall we do? You tell us; we don't know anything to do!"

Mother laughed right out, such a clear, sparkling, happy laugh that a frisky little squirrel, that was nosing about under the elm-tree, sat up on his haunches and looked inquiringly at her with his sharp, black eyes.

"It seems to me that you have a good deal of confidence in yourselves as entertainers to volunteer to take part in the program, when you have nothing you can do," but the smile that went with her words made them know she was glad they had offered, anyway.

"You'll help us think of something, won't you, Mother?" was the next anxious question.

"I most surely will, my dear, just give

me a few minutes' time. I wonder, though, if you have forgotten about the May baskets. This is the night to hang them, you know."

Jane and Mary gave a gasp of astonishment, and from each of them came a prolonged "Oh-h-h." In the excitement of school affairs, May baskets had been wholly forgotten.

But now the remembrance of last year's good time came back to them—the wonderful little baskets they had worked on for a whole week, and the beautiful things they had turned out to be when filled with jonquils and tulips and violets. Suddenly Jane's smile faded.

"Why, Mother, there isn't a single flower anywhere," she said, in despair.

Mary's voice was no more hopeful as she added, "And we haven't time to

make baskets now, even if we had anything to put in them."

Mother laughed again so that the frisky little squirrel had to stop his work and take another sharp look at her.

"Now don't try to tell me," she said, "that there isn't a single flower anywhere! The world is full of flowers, and all we have to do is to hunt for them, you know. And as for time—why, there are two whole hours before supper."

"But last year," Mary reminded her, "it took us days and days to make our baskets."

"Perhaps it did, last year," laughed Mother, "but it can't take you so long this year, if you want the fun of hanging them after supper. Besides, the prettiness of a thing does not always depend

upon the length of time we spend in making it, you know. I think I have a suggestion for you."

Both clamored, "What is it? Oh, what is it?"

First, they were sent to get some things in readiness, while Mother went to her stacks of music and searched through them, humming to herself in a puzzled sort of way.

Library paste, the yarn bag, a package of lace-paper doilies from the pantry, and that familiar old friend, the big book of wall-paper samples, were brought. When Mother turned at last from her search, with a sheet of music in her hand, she found them all ready for work at the library table.

"Fine!" was her word of praise for

their quickness. "Now we are going to see that our friends have their May-day greetings, in a hurry."

First, the gayest sheets of wall-paper were chosen. "For," said Mother, "if we haven't many flowers to put inside, we must put flowers on the outside, you see."

Circles were cut, most of them about nine inches in diameter. These circles were then cut into two equal parts, to be used for two different baskets. Each part was wound into a cornucopia and fastened with a few stitches of yarn, the ends being tied in a loose, flowing bow. Handles, too, long enough for reaching over door-knobs, were made of the same yarn.

"My goodness!" ejaculated Jane, jubilantly," we can make a thousand of these before supper!"

A few were made from the lace-paper

doilies, in exactly the same way. And then came the question, "There they are. Now, Mother, where are the flowers?"

"Well, you could go over to Mr. Sander's flower shop and get a box full of short-stemmed bits of blossoms, left from the day's work, for only a few pennies, but let's try to see what we can do in our own garden first."

It was quite surprising what they found. Many, many fresh, shiny violet leaves, and here and there, a few shy little purple blossoms; small branches from the peach-tree, covered with buds, the daintiest of pink edging their close-curled petals; a handful of crocus blooms; green shoots of iris; and some red berries still clinging to a sheltered rose-bush. Then, from her pot of trailing vines, Mother brought them enough

sprigs to finish out and make each basket "as dainty as a spring morning," she said.

"Mary is to stay here for supper," she told them, "and afterwards you may hang your baskets. Just now, while I am busy in the kitchen, I want you to see what you can do toward learning this old-fashioned May song."

"Oh, Mother," exclaimed Jane, as they bent above it, heads together, "there are two verses—that's one for Mary and one for me!"

Such a scampering about through the warm darkness of that lovely April evening! Such tiptoeing, such excited little knocks, such hiding, and such shrieks of delighted surprise when, sometimes, they were caught! In between trips, they rushed in to the library, and sang over

and over again the quaint little song, until they felt sure they knew it well enough to please even Miss Johnson.

No one in all the land was happier than the two little girls who snuggled down in their beds, that night, to happy springtime dreams. And the next afternoon, when the May-pole ribbons were fluttering in the warm spring breeze, and all the children, with shining faces and sparkling eyes, stood about it, no one was happier than Mary in her blue dress and Jane in her pink dress, as they sang:

Come boys, for it's May time!
Come girls, for it's play time!
Come, hang a May basket at somebody's
door!

A starry-eyed crocus,
Pink blossoms unfolding,

With jonquils and violets
Safe in its holding;
Come, hang a May basket at somebody's door!

Come all, for it's May time!
A beautiful gay time!
Come, hang loving-kindness at somebody's door!

A sweet word of comfort,
A bit of glad living,
A smile and a handclasp,
A tender forgiving;
Come, hang loving-kindness at somebody's door!

June
Paint-pots and
tin cans

JUNE

PAINT-POTS AND TIN CANS

IT had been a lovely day, very early in June, when the boys and girls of Jefferson school went trooping out through the great stone doorway with the summer's vacation ahead of them—three long months of freedom from lessons, and of time to follow their own pleasant plans.

Boys chased after one another, racing across streets and down alleyways in the wildest excitement. Girls went hippety-hopping along to the tune of jerky little songs, chattering and laughing, looking not unlike a flock of bright butterflies in their gay gingham dresses.

Down the street they went, helter-skelter, turning off at this corner and that corner, waving and shouting good-by to one another. It was not hard to see that all, boys and girls alike, were running over with joy at the thought of being set free.

But now school had been out for only a week, and already Jane was beginning to find that she had more time to do things than she had things to do.

This morning, as she ate her breakfast, she was wondering what she could do to occupy herself when music practice was over. She wondered as she brushed the crumbs from the table for Mother; she wondered as she tidied up the dolls' house in the library; and she was still wondering, and getting a little dismal and dumpish in the process, when the

telephone rang. It was Jane, and her voice was quite excited, so much so that Mary had to ask her to say over again the long jumbled-up sentence.

"I say," repeated Jane, as slowly as she could, "Mother wants you to come and spend the day and bring your old clothes."

"Bring my old clothes!" exclaimed Mary. "What for?" and she giggled at the thought of it.

"Never mind what for," Jane told her, "that's a secret. But be sure to bring an old dress, one your mother doesn't let you wear any more, and old socks and old shoes. Come in about an hour."

Mary could hardly get the receiver on the hook, she was so excited. The dumps and dismals flew away, and the smiles came out and made her a very sweet lit-

tle girl indeed as she ran to tell Mother what a funny invitation she had received.

"What do you suppose we are going to do?" she questioned, hopping up and down on one foot. But Mother had no idea what it could be. Big Sister couldn't imagine, either, what such an invitation meant, but she hunted up some old clothes and helped Mary through with her music, so that, when the hour was up, a happy little sister kissed them good-by and went skipping away with a bundle under her arm. And, of course, all the way down the street and around the corner she wondered.

It had not rained, so it could not be wading or mud-pies. She would surely have been told if they were going on a hike or to the woods. What were they

going to do? Jane came to meet her, but still she wouldn't tell. And when they went out on the back porch and she saw a long row of tin coffee cans, the play-table and the two chairs in front of it, and a bundle of old rags—even then she could not guess what the fun was to be.

"Can't you make it out yet?" laughed Jane. "What do you smell?"

Mary wrinkled up her nose in a long sniff. Finally she cried, "Why, it's paint! I smell paint!"

"Well, that's it," Jane admitted. "We are going to paint—all by ourselves. Mother says we may paint these coffee cans and make them into pretty cans for rice and tea and things—some for your mother and some for mine. I'm going to make a blue one for Auntie Grace to match her new kitchen, and maybe I'll

make a red one for Grandmother, and a green one—" But Jane had to stop for want of breath, and just then Mother came in and sent them up-stairs to change into their old clothes.

What fun it was to watch her open the small cans of bright-colored enamel paint! As she stirred it slowly round and round with a stick, mixing it well, she told them that she had bought it at the ten-cent store, and thought that buying paint and brushes for little daughters wasn't a bit more foolish than spending the same money for candy or popcorn or peanuts.

With papers spread beneath the table to catch any drops which might fall, and plenty of rags to wipe hands, they set to work eagerly. Mary painted her first can orange, and set it in a corner to

dry. Then she made the top black, and placed it carefully beside the can. Jane chose bright blue for her can, and orange for its top. Next, Mary made one all in scarlet, and Jane one in green.

By lunch time, each had her cans finished and set away to dry, and then Mother showed them how to do their own cleaning up. Rags, well soaked with turpentine, took off all the paint, and soap and water finished making them as fresh and sweet as ever. In such funny places they found spots, when they looked at each other and in the mirror. Right on the tip of Jane's nose was a daub of orange, and on her knees, two blotches of green. Mary had some in her hair and on her forehead, and her knees had to be well scrubbed, too. But that was a big part of the fun, and, what with

giggling and squealing, and running back and forth from mirror to basin, lunch was ready before they were.

The afternoon was spent in drawing designs to be used next day in decorating their cans. Mother had thought she was going to be needed in this part of the work, but she soon found that little girls who have taken an interest in their drawing lessons have plenty of splendid ideas as to what can be done with lines and circles and blossoms.

With their drawings as guides, the next morning found them busy at work decorating the cans which were dry enough to handle. It did not take them long to see that most of them would look much better with a second coat of paint, and, very wisely, they decided to put it on, even if they did have to wait one

more day before quite finishing them.

"What's the difference?" said Jane. "It will be just as much fun to-morrow. Daddy always tells me when I get in a hurry to finish things—'Don't forget there's going to be another day to-morrow!' "

Even Mother was surprised at the success of their efforts. As they grew more used to handling their brushes, they tried flowers—red poppies on a black can, and yellow daisies on a blue one, were two of the most successful. Jane even tried her hand at a red and green parrot, and it must have been a pretty good try, for when Daddy saw it, he laughed and said, "Oh, ho! I suppose this is the cracker can!"

For easier and quicker results, one day they cut birds and flowers from crêpe

paper and pasted them on the cans, and then gave the whole a coat of shellac, under Mother's direction.

Day after day Mary ran up the street to work with Jane on the cool back porch. And, before long, the cupboard shelf where Mother let them keep their finished pieces looked as gay and pretty as the bed of snapdragons outside the porch door.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Mary as they put the last cans away, "Do you know it has been two whole weeks since we started to paint?"

"Why, it seems about a minute," was Jane's reply. "I guess it is because we have been so busy that we haven't thought to count the days."

"I suppose so," agreed Mary. "I just love to make things, don't you? Mother

says people are always happier when they are busy."

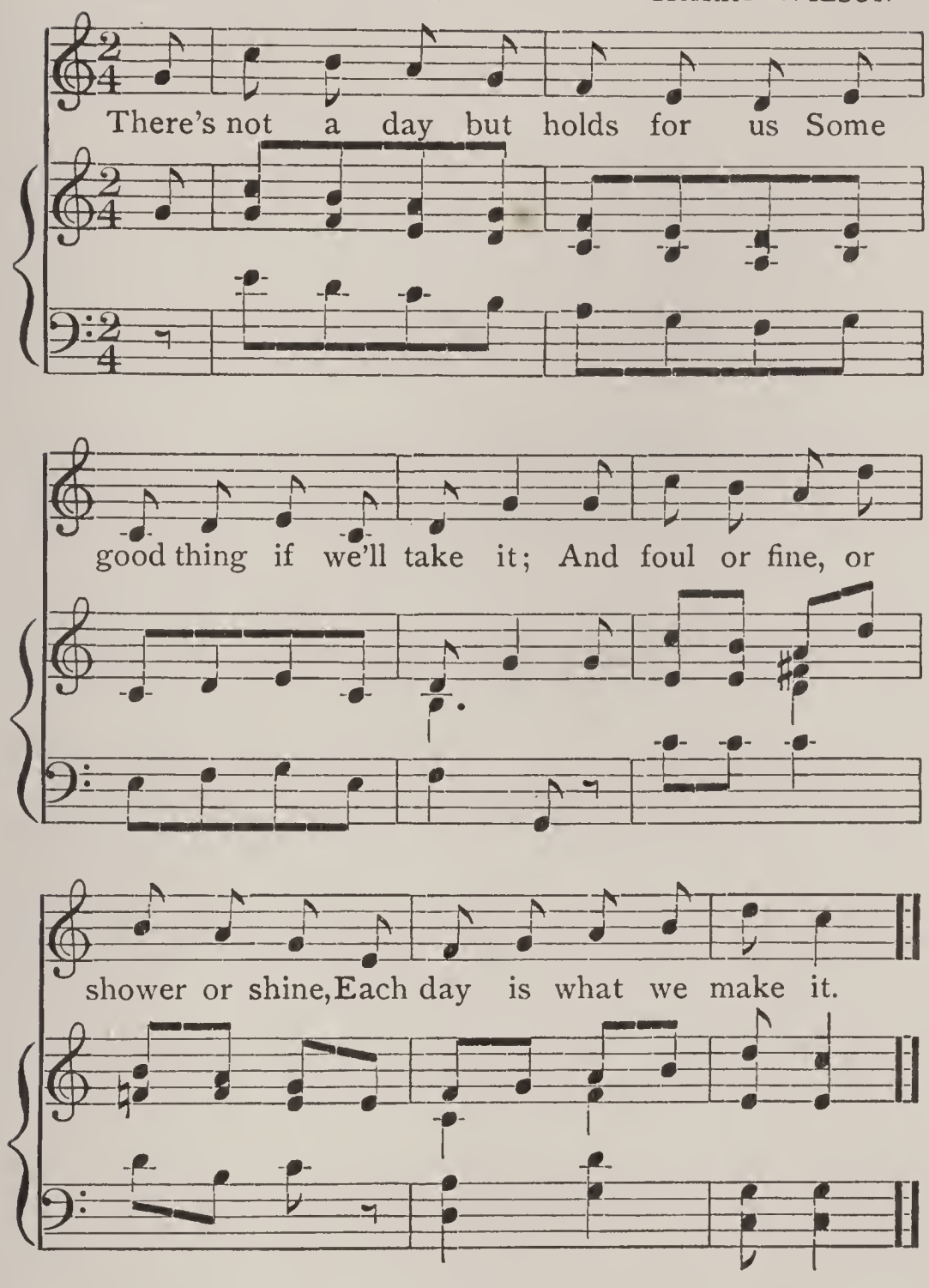
And, without a doubt, these two little girls who were busily tidying up their paints and brushes were happy, for they sang as they worked, until even the catbird in the lilac bush listened with his head cocked inquisitively:

"There's not a day but holds for us
Some good thing, if we'll take it;
And foul or fine, or shower or shine,
Each day is what we make it."

This story originally appeared in "The Christian Science Monitor," in slightly different form.

EACH DAY

REBA MAHAN STEVENS HARRY WILSON



July
Little
dressmakers
F. LILEY-YOUNG

JULY

LITTLE DRESSMAKERS

JANE'S mother was putting the last stitches in her new voile dress. It was a blue dress, just the shade of delphiniums, and she had enjoyed every minute she had spent sewing on it. Somehow it was just a bit like working with the delphiniums themselves. But now it was done, and she gathered together the scraps of left-over material. Jane had been waiting patiently for them all the week, planning, and dreaming of tiny blue dresses for her little lady dolls who lived in the doll-house.

Down on the front porch, she could

hear the chatter of little-girl voices. She was so glad that, when Jane had come to her with the question, "What shall I do this afternoon?," she had thought to suggest a doll-dressmaking party. She was glad that the porch was big, and wide, and shady this warm summer afternoon; she was glad that her little daughter had such pleasant friends; she was glad about the garden beneath the window, and the bowl of bright zinnias from it that was on the porch table; she was glad about the pitcher of lemonade, hidden away in the ice-box, with the green mint shining through. And when she came down-stairs, somehow she brought her gladness to the group of little girls spread out over the porch, sewing. Such a confusion of colors and materials!

Each small seamstress had a circle of pieces about her.

"Why, deary me, I think this looks as if a gypsy pedlar had been here," she laughed. "Or maybe the end of the rainbow—or, one way I look at it, I can see butterflies, or paint pots spilled—anyway, it looks as if some dolls were going to have lovely new dresses."

Even Isabel, from next door, was there. Mother was a bit surprised when she saw her stitching away for dear life on a wee party gown.

"Why, Isabel," she said, "I didn't know you made doll clothes any more. I thought you'd given up dolls."

"Well, I don't make them very often," admitted Isabel, "but once in a while I just have to get out my dolls and sew for

them. When I saw the girls over here, I couldn't stand it. See what I have made for my little old Dottie doll!"

All the younger girls leaned forward eagerly to see the small garment held up for inspection. What a treasure it was! A wee, wee gown of dainty flowered georgette, a tiny tight-fitting waist, with bits of short puffed sleeves, and a wide billowing skirt finished with deep scallops!

"What beautiful work, Isabel!" exclaimed Mother in delight. "Why, this tiny dress is a piece of really fine needlework!"

Isabel flushed with pleasure, but she was quick to say, generously, "Well, I should be able to sew; I've had sewing in school, and my mother has always

helped me. See what Virginia has made, too."

Virginia held up her work, timidly. "It doesn't look much like Isabel's," she said.

"But it is pretty, just the same. Perhaps if you would try something not quite so hard, you would have better success. Could I help you?"

"Would you?" And Virginia's face broke into happy smiles.

"I'd love to help any of you. Somehow I feel like a little girl this afternoon. I feel just like making doll clothes, only I haven't brought my doll."

"Here's mine, Mother!" and Jane held out her tiny doll. "I couldn't make her a dress if I tried a hundred years!" Jane's face was so solemn, and her voice

so woeful that every one broke out laughing.

"A hundred years!" came from Isabel. "Well, Jane, I'm afraid the styles would all be changed, if it took you that long!"

Mother laughed, too, but it was a very tender, loving laugh, and she said gently, "I think the trouble is that you are trying to make a dress like the one Isabel is making. Don't you think it would be better to try something more simple? You wouldn't think of trying to do the arithmetic problems that Isabel does, would you?"

"No," answered Jane, slowly.

"I haven't a doubt that, when you have practiced a lot, you will be taking wee stitches exactly like Isabel's, but not just yet. You and Mary do very well for such

little girls, I think. Your work on your tea towels is perfect, and it seems to me that is really more of a test of your sewing than the work you do on doll clothes."

Two little faces brightened with smiles.

"Would you like me to show you how I made dresses for my small dolls when I first began sewing for them?"

They piled her lap full of scraps of material; they brought her scissors, and their dolls; but she shook her head when they offered a threaded needle.

"No," she laughed, "it is so simple that we do not even have to use a needle and thread. Really, the only thing we need to know is how to cut a circle. See," she went on, measuring off and folding a piece of goods just as they had

so often done in cutting rounds of paper, at school, "we want our circle to be as long from the center to the outer edge as the doll is from neck to foot."

Snip, snip, snip, went her scissors.

"Now in the center, we cut out the neck—it may be round, or square, or V-shaped, just as you like. On either side, we will cut some V-shaped openings for the arms. And there is the dress, except for the sash, which is really the most important part, since it holds the dress in place, you see. Did you ever hear of any real little girl whose sash is the most cherished part of her dress?"

"I did," came quickly from Mary. "The Japanese girls think more of their sashes than of anything else they wear."

Mother slipped the circular dress on Jane's doll, pinned it at the neck behind,

and tied a long sash of the same material into a bow at the back.

"Now, you see, we can pull the skirt around even, and it looks exactly like a full-gathered skirt. There," holding it up for them to examine, "how do you like that?"

Great enthusiasm greeted the result of Mother's work.

"Why, it looks like a really made dress," was Jane's way of praising it, and the others agreed.

"If you like," Mother told them, "you can cut an opening from neck to foot in the back. Then, while the sash is tied around the doll, you may sew it fast to the dress with some short, stout stitches, and I think you might almost call that a 'really made dress,' as Jane says."

Next she cut one from velvet.

"Now, you see, velvet is too heavy for a full skirt, and so we will lay all our fullness into deep pleats under the arms, and fasten them firmly with a few stitches." And when that was done, she went on, "A band of ribbon around her waist, this tiny flower for an ornament! How does that suit?"

"Fine! Fine!" came the chorus.

Jane and Mary were jubilant. Such scrambling among their pieces to find the very prettiest, and such plans for whole boxes of dresses! Mother turned to see how Virginia was getting on.

"I've been trying to fix one out of this pink satin, but I can't. I'm afraid there isn't enough left now for anything," Virginia told her, dejectedly.

"Let me help you," and Mother smoothed out the piece of rosebud pink.

"We will make a simple little dress, but one that will be very pretty."

And, as she worked, she went on talking slowly. "One long, narrow piece for the waist, to come just below the arms. Then another straight piece, somewhat wider, for the skirt, gathered on to the waist, very full. Now, two straps for the shoulders. There—isn't that a dainty evening gown? If it is to be a day-time frock, all you need to do is to add a ruffle around the neck, or any sort of wide collar you like."

"It looks easy!" said Virginia, turning it round and round with admiration.

"And it is easy," Mother assured her. "You will have a pleasant time working out gowns like that."

"I was getting almost discouraged, a while ago," admitted Virginia, but she

looked far from being discouraged now, as she turned her work-bag upside down and emptied out bundle after bundle of gay scraps.

"Yes, because you were trying something too hard. Of course, we know perfectly well that each of us can learn all the hard things we need to know, but it is easier to learn them a little at a time. Don't you think so?"

" 'Every little bit, added to what you have, makes just a little bit more,' " sang Isabel, and Mother nodded her happy approval as she left them stitching away contentedly, and went to find the lemonade, hidden away in the ice-box, with the green mint shining through.

This story originally appeared in "The Christian Science Monitor."

August
Pots of paint
and pieces
of oilcloth

AUGUST

POTS OF PAINT AND PIECES OF OILCLOTH

MARY and Jane were swinging out under the cherry-tree. They had started their morning's play in the sand pile, but, for some reason, that did not seem to be just what they wanted to do. Soon they left it and tried the bicycle but, after a few times around the block, that, too, was given up.

As she went about her work, in the kitchen, Mother could hear them talking out in the swing and, as the conversation seemed to lag more and more, she was not surprised to see them coming in

through the back door in a short while. Vacation days were beginning to drag a bit, and the question, "What shall we do now?" was apt to bob up at any hour of the day.

To meet this perplexing query, Mother kept her mind busy turning over fresh plans and suggestions, and that was the reason these two little playmates saw a row of familiar-looking paint cans on the porch table as they came through. When these caught their eyes, both stopped instantly.

"Why," said Mary, "there are our cans of paint!" And her face broke into welcoming smiles.

"That's just what they are!" agreed Jane. "Our very same little cans of paint that we used when we colored the tin

cans. Don't you remember what fun we had?"

Mary remembered quite well, it seemed; and Mother, inside the kitchen door, was glad to listen to their enthusiasm and to hear each in turn declare, "I just love to paint!"

"Come in and see what I am doing!" she called. And, though it was only a common sort of task, it proved very interesting to the two little girls. The kitchen table was getting a new dress of white oilcloth, and Mother was trimming a long strip from the side.

"It looks like the cream candy we get at the Fair," was Jane's comment.

They felt its shiny surface and enjoyed the fresh painty smell of it, deciding that it must be a very pleasant bit of work to

cover kitchen tables with new oilcloth.

"What are you going to do with the scraps?" questioned Jane. "Couldn't we make something out of them, maybe?"

"Yes," was the answer, "you may have every scrap—and I know something you will like to do with them, too."

"Oh, Mother, what is it? May we do it now?" was the next question.

"Yes, you may do it now—right this minute. Only, first, you must skip up-stairs and find two old dresses to put on. You are going to paint."

There was a good deal of racing about up-stairs, and a good bit of talking and giggling, but presently down they came, ready for work, laughing over their funny appearance in the tight, faded dresses, which no amount of paint could hurt.

"I think we shall start on something easy, at first," Mother advised them, "and that will be doilies."

"Doilies!" came in one voice of disappointment.

"But Mother, are we going to sew?" protested Jane as the enthusiasm faded from her face. "I thought we were going to paint!"

"So you are, my dear. You are going to paint doilies." That brought the smiles back quickly. "And the first thing you will have to do is to cut them out. Get a cup from the china closet. That will be your pattern for circles."

Soon everything needed for the work had been gathered together, and two smiling faces bent over the porch table, while two pair of hands went in and out among the materials as busy as bees.

Mother showed them how to mark the circles, tracing them always on the wrong side of the oilcloth and then cutting them out with nice even strokes of the scissors. She suggested six for each one, so that they might make a set to be used as tumbler doilies. The cutting was soon done, and the two workers were eager to begin painting. First, they must choose their decorations, and Mother laughed a little when she suggested daisies for a beginning.

"They are simple little flowers, I know, but so pretty, too. Don't you think it is a good plan to start with simple, easy things when you are trying out something new? You see, when you succeed with the easy ones, it gives you more courage for something harder."

So daisies were quickly chosen, and

after a few stray ones had been drawn on paper for practice, the painting was started.

"I'll tell you what I think is one of the very nicest things about daisies," remarked Jane, as she stirred the yellow paint round and round, "it doesn't make any difference how many petals you put on them, they are all right!"

"Yes, that's true," agreed Mother, laughing with them, "but I believe you will make more of a success if you draw a faint outline before you start painting. Then you will not be so apt to have only a tiny space left for the last petal, and have to squeeze in a half-grown one."

Jane made a group of three small daisies in the center of her circles, while Mary chose to use one large one. Bright yellow they were, with black centers.

"Oh, I like this!" was Mary's emphatic decision, as she bent above her work. "I like the way the paint spreads over the smooth oilcloth, don't you?"

"I should say I do!" was the quick response. "It's better even than painting cans. Mother, shall we have to wait until to-morrow for this to dry before we can finish them, as we did with the cans?"

"Not if you are careful little painters," Mother assured them. "You can easily finish every bit of them right away. Then, by evening, or to-morrow at the latest, they will be dry and ready to use."

After the flowers were done, tiny sprays of green leaves were added, and around the edge was painted a border of black about a fourth of an inch wide. Sometimes there were blotches and daubs, but these were easily wiped off

the smooth surface so that no one was in the least disturbed by them.

Twelve little painted doilies, spread out over the table, made a very attractive showing, and two little girls were as happy as could be over the results of their work.

Although she tried hard not to listen to their whispered conversation, Mother overheard enough to make her feel sure that the first thought of these loving little girls was for their mothers, and for her part she felt sure that she was really going to be proud to make use of these gay table pieces.

No use to put the paint away, for plans were quickly made for another day's work! And when that was done, another, and another followed, until the scraps of oilcloth were all used up and the paint

very low in the cans. And such an array of pretty things!

With the small pieces for encouragement, they had, day by day, attempted larger and more difficult ones. Doilies were made, large enough to be used beneath vases and the water pitcher, decorated, some with scarlet poppies, some with cornflowers, some with tiny forget-me-nots, outlined with a tracing of gilt paint and having a border of harmonizing color with an added line of gold.

Best of all was the gift each one had made for a baby friend—a bib and tray-cloth to match. Mother had drawn the outline of a little chicken, about two inches in length, and from this had cut them a cardboard pattern. It was easy, they found, to run their pencils around this stiff picture. Each chicken was

painted yellow, and when he was quite dry, was outlined with a tiny line of black at the very edge, and given a neat little black eye. A chicken in each corner of the bib and the same on the tray-cloth did not take very long, and proved to be great fun.

Mother had cut the bibs for them, and she was very glad to bind the necks with tape. How pretty they were! Jane and Mary could scarcely wait to carry them to the baby friends who were to use them.

"Why, it looks like a Gift Shop!" declared Jane when they finally sorted out all the things they had made. And it did indeed!

Mary selected from her share one of the larger doilies, decorated with scarlet poppies and black bands. "I'm going to keep this one for our teacher," she said,

"and take it to her when school begins. It will be just the thing for her to use on her desk!"

Jane looked a bit taken aback for a moment and then she said happily, "Oh, then I know what I will do! I was thinking I would take my yellow daisy one to her, but I'll give it to Miss Norton, the Principal, instead, and then they will both have one. Isn't it funny—I was so glad when school closed last spring, and do you know I believe I'll be just as glad when it begins again!"

"So shall I," agreed Mary.

This story originally appeared in "The Christian Science Monitor."

September
Tea-pot stands that came out of the flower garden

SEPTEMBER

TEAPOT STANDS THAT CAME OUT OF THE FLOWER GARDEN

WARM and rosy with the heat of a golden September afternoon, three little girls lounged about under the shade of Jane's cherry-tree. They were almost as quiet as the soft yellow butterflies which went fluttering about, up and down and out and in, now here and now there, through the sunshine. Jane lay watching a bee, busy at his work of gathering honey from a stray clump of white clover. How funny he was, she thought lazily, and yet how he seemed to know just what he

was about. Mary, flat on her back, was looking straight up into the cloudless sky, and Virginia swung dreamily back and forth, back and forth in the swing, with half an eye on Mother who was in the flower garden at the end of the yard. Snip, snip, her scissors were going, and, one by one, great brilliant zinnias were being added to those which already overflowed her basket.

"Did you ever see anything so blue as the sky?" spoke Mary, slowly, after a long silence. "I guess it's the bluest thing in all the world."

"No, it isn't," came back quickly from Virginia. "I'm looking at something bluer, right now."

"What is it, I'd like to know!" and Mary sat upright, ready for an argument.

"It's those cornflowers down there," and Virginia nodded in the direction of the garden.

Blue they were, those cornflowers—even Mary had to admit that—blue, and dainty as fairies, set thickly in their mass of delicate green foliage. Then the blue of a few late delphiniums attracted them, and before many minutes they were in the middle of a discussion of the different flowers: which was prettiest; which had the sweetest fragrance; which made the loveliest bouquets; and a dozen other questions that no one but dear little girls would think of.

"I tell you what—I wish we could keep the gardens growing all year!" declared Jane, at last.

"So do I. I think it's a shame all those pretty flowers have to get chased out by

Jack Frost, mean old fellow!" and Virginia's eyes snapped. "Look at your mother, now, with that big basket of zinnias! Wouldn't it be nice if she could pick one like that every day all year?"

Mother came within hearing in time for the last remark, and she laughed as she took off her garden hat and turned it into a fan.

"But perhaps I shouldn't want to gather zinnias every day in the year," she answered Virginia. "Summer is my playtime, and nothing in all the world is quite so beautiful and so much fun as a garden. But, deary me, I shouldn't like to miss the snow-storms, and the skating, and the icicles, and the snowmen! Would you, now, really?"

"Well, no," on second thought Virginia had to admit that she would not

want to do without a single one of those things. "But I'd like to keep the garden and flowers, too," she still insisted.

"Well, we can keep the flowers in a way, you know," and, with that three faces were turned quickly and inquisitively toward Mother. "Not just as they are, of course, but in a way to make us remember very well the summer and carry its prettiness into the winter days."

She paused with a teasing smile, but had not long to wait for the question she knew would come, "How? What do you mean?"

"It's something I have overlooked in the summer's good times, entirely forgotten until this minute. Virginia's remark brought it to my mind, and it isn't too late to do it yet. Perhaps we shall enjoy it more, now that we have to hunt a

little harder for our colors than we would have done in midsummer when the garden was running over with all kinds of bloom."

No dreamy lounging now! Every one was up and at attention to find out what Mother had in her mind.

Not a very difficult piece of work, she told them—just the making of little tea-pot stands, or glass mats, or whatever they wished to call them, out of pressed flower petals arranged on a stiff background under a small square of glass. It sounded interesting, and as though something pretty might come of it.

"But you can never believe just how pretty they are until you make one," Mother assured them. "In the first place, no two of them are ever exactly alike, because different shapes and colors of

petals are used. You'll just have to see them to understand."

"Well, how do we begin?" asked Jane, spreading out her hands in a funny little gesture which plainly meant that, so far as she was concerned, she was ready to begin that minute, and spoke for the rest. Mother was thoughtful for a moment and then she said, "I think you will have to begin by doing one small errand. While I get ready to help you, run down to Mr. Anderson's Picture Shop and ask him to cut you each a piece of glass five inches square. If we decide to make many, I'm sure we can find some odd pieces in the attic and have them cut, so they will cost nothing, but just now we will buy what we need to start our work."

When there are plans afoot, there is no loitering, and Mother was scarcely

ready for them when they were back.

The big kitchen table was taken over as a work-bench. From her writing desk, Mother brought some heavy cardboard which had come off the backs of tablets. These were cut to fit the glass squares, and next covered with wall-paper of a soft shade of tan, without flower or figure, which Mother called oatmeal paper. This done, they were sent into the garden to bring a handful of all the different sorts of bright flowers they could find. With these before them, the real work, and the pleasantest part of it all, started in earnest. Flowers were torn apart, and petals of the same color heaped together. On each cardboard square a pencilled dot was made to mark the exact center, and from that point the design started.

"Now you must use your own preference in working out your pattern," Mother told them, as she showed them how to put a tiny bit of paste on the background and press the petal smoothly over it.

"Get us some toothpicks, Jane dear, to spread our paste. These brushes are much too stiff and heavy for such dainty work," she said.

Dainty work it was indeed, and though, for a few brief moments, small fingers felt clumsy in handling fragile petals, it took none of them long to become quite nimble at it.

Starting at the very center, Mary put a tiny speck of orange marigold; from that she pointed outward four petals from a red zinnia. In between each of these she placed scraps of green parsley

leaves, and then all around this small design she ran a sort of border of yellow petals. It began to look quite like a colored drawing and, by this time, she was beginning to feel so at home with the work that she had no trouble in finishing it out to the edge. As Mother had said, each one looked entirely different, because each worker chose petals of varied shapes and colors, and arranged them according to her own plan.

Virginia made quite a heavy design which covered her background well all over; Jane's pattern was more open; while Mary's had a compact center, an open space, and then a border at the very edge. When the designs were in place, the clean glass was placed over them, and Mother brought out a roll of gummed gilt-paper binding which they

were to use to finish the edge and hold glass and cardboard together. Four strips were cut for each worker, one for each side of her square. If Mother had imagined this was going to be a difficult part of the work for them, she must have been greatly surprised, for after she had showed them exactly how to do it, they went at it as though they had been doing nothing else all their lives but pasting gummed binding on glass.

Before they were ready to have it so, the work was done, and a hubbub of enthusiasm and delight filled the kitchen.

"You said we wouldn't know how pretty they were until we made one. You were right, Mother!" and Jane gave her a quick squeeze of happiness and love. Then, "But what are these for? What shall we do with them?"

"I know what I'm going to do with mine," broke in Virginia. "This very morning my mother wanted something to set a jar of flowers on, to keep the dampness off the table. This is the very thing, isn't it?" and she turned a questioning look to Mother.

"It is indeed. I think, too, they might be used for hot dishes if you were careful, and for teapot stands, as I said at first. I know another thing—they make dear little plaques to hang on the wall. It seems to me you might like to make a number of them while the garden is with us."

So that is how it came about that, on more than one afternoon while the September sky kept its blue and the garden bloomed bravely, some happy little girls

hovered about, busy as bees, gathering bright petals and working them into fascinating patterns, weaving into them loving thoughts of the mothers, and grandmothers, and aunties, and friends who were to find them, some gift morning, wrapped in little secret bundles and tied about with gay ribbons.

October
A scrap-book house
F. LILEY-YOUNG

OCTOBER

A SCRAP-BOOK HOUSE

WHEN a little girl has been looking forward all the week to Saturday as a day when she is to have one long, glorious play in the fallen leaves, and then wakes on Saturday morning to find the rain coming down steadily from a heavy, gray sky, it is not to be wondered at if she finds it a bit of a task to keep sweet and good-tempered.

Mary was doing her best, but like many another girl (both little and big) she was having rather a hard time giving up the thing which she had planned.

October had colored the leaves so beautifully and shaken them down from the trees—certainly it seemed there could not have been a pleasanter thing than she and Jane had thought of doing. The whole week through they had talked of the lunch they would take to the park in the next block, and of the houses they would build from the great heaps of leaves there. But now, here was the rain—not just a shower, but a steady downpour from a sky that looked as though it had enough rain in it to last for days and weeks.

Of course, after all, it was rather interesting to watch Mother stirring up the bowl of yellow pumpkin custard for the pies, and she was on the point of asking if she might bake one in her own small pie-tin, when the telephone rang.

She came back from answering it with a smiling face and shining eyes.

"It's Jane, Mother," she announced, happily. "She wants me to come and stay for lunch—and she told me to bring a pair of scissors! What for, do you suppose? May I go?"

"Of course you may go. And as for the scissors, I have no idea what they are for, only I feel sure there is something nice in store for you," was Mother's reply, as she slid a spicy, yellow pie into the oven.

Before many minutes, Mary was on her way to her little friend's home. Down the street she went, snugly tucked in her green slicker. The raindrops made funny little thudding sounds as they came down on her umbrella, and, as she scuffed her way through the drifted

leaves, she found that she was altogether enjoying this walk through the rain.

Jane was watching from the window for her, and she was scarcely inside the door before she was shown what was waiting for her.

"Mother has been cleaning house this week, and just look!" exclaimed the small hostess. "Just see all the old magazines she has given us! And see these big books with whole pages that have never been used. Father had them once in his office. And look at these books of wall-paper samples—the paperhanger gave them to Mother one day. She says we may have them all. And she has the best scheme. Guess what!"

But when Mary couldn't guess, Jane had to tell her.

"Well, first we will go through the

magazines, and cut out furniture and all the things that go into a house—bath-room things, and rugs, and lamps, and everything. Then we will take one page of the book for a living-room, and paste it full of the furniture that goes in a living-room; and one page for a kitchen, and paste it full of things that belong there; and put the beds and dressers on the bedroom page. See?"

Mary saw instantly.

"Oh, that's going to be ever so much fun. Why, we can have as many rooms as queens have in their palaces, if we fill all the leaves in these books! Which books are we going to use?"

"Either kind. You choose first," came the generous response.

So Mary chose a book of wall-paper samples, because she decided she could

think of the flowered background as being the walls of her rooms.

Then the work began. Snip, snip, went the scissors. Rustle, rustle, went the paper pages as they were torn from the magazines. Before long the waste basket was filled to the top with clippings, and each worker had a pile of paper house furnishings beside her on the floor. Such fun as they had selecting the couches they liked best, the beds which seemed to them the very prettiest, the rugs which suited their different tastes, and the lamps, the mirrors, and the pictures for the walls!

But if the selecting and cutting had been fun, it was even more of a delight to arrange the articles on the pages and paste them neatly in place. Mother saw to it that the big library table was

cleared, so that there was plenty of elbow room and no getting in the way of each other. There was paste, there were cloths to smooth the pasted pictures in place, and there was a damp cloth for cleaning hands when they became so sticky that they interfered with good work.

With only a stop for lunch, these two little home-builders worked until late afternoon, wholly in love with this new idea, while the rain-drops pattered down on the brown leaves outside.

"You are to take yours home, you know," said Jane, when they were finishing their work. "It is yours. Mother said it was to be. And, sometime, you can add more rooms to it." And as Mary flashed at her a happy, grateful smile, she went on, "I think this is so much fun, don't you?"

"I should think I do!" was the quick reply. "It's the most fun we've had for a long time—except playing in the leaves, and we can do that next week I think, don't you? It can't rain for always, can it?"

A happy, contented Mary went home through the rain with her precious book tucked beneath her slicker.

When Mother had finished looking through its pages, there was a twinkle in her eyes as she said, "Well, dear, it seems to me that you really made a house in the leaves, after all."

For a moment Mary did not see the joke but, when she did, she had a good laugh.

"I did, didn't I? I'll tell Jane that." And then, snuggled in Mother's lap, she confided, "Mother, we did have the best

time. I wish every little girl knew about our game. It is so much more fun than just cutting and pasting without making something special out of the pictures."

This story originally appeared in "The Christian Science Monitor."

November
The "Rainy Day
Grocery"

NOVEMBER

THE "RAINY DAY GROCERY"

SPLASH, splash, came the raindrops against the window, tapping it sharply, then trickling down the shining pane in numberless little rivulets. The chrysanthemum bushes in the garden were beaten over before the steady November downpour; the leafless branches of the trees bent lower with the weight of it; and in the middle of the yard was a miniature lake where the water had gathered too fast for the ground to soak it up.

But, inside, all was warm and cozy.

Jane sat at the kitchen table eating a belated breakfast, as little sleepyheads so often do on rainy Saturday mornings. Close beside her, in her low rocker, was Mother, peeling the roundest and reddest of apples. On the stove, something very sweet-smelling and spicy was bubbling in a kettle. The apples with their shiny faces turned up from the basket looked so jolly, Mother seemed so contented and comfortable, and the kitchen was so snug and pretty, that it seemed strange that the only gloomy thing in the room should be Jane's face. But so it was. Not a smile—not ever so small a smile, could be seen there as she bent above her bowl of cereal.

"I don't see why it had to rain and spoil everything," she presently said, and her voice sounded like the croaking of a

cross little frog. "Nobody wanted it to rain!"

"Oh, but it hasn't spoiled everything —not a bit of it," was Mother's quick answer. "And somebody did want it to rain, too. Look at the birds darting out from the vines over and over again. They can scarcely wait for the nice baths they are going to have in the eaves when the downpour stops. They really wanted it to rain."

"Well, anyway, I didn't. Neither did the other girls. We have been planning all week to skate up in the Park to-day," and Jane ate her crispy toast without the smallest sign of enjoyment.

"But surely there is something else you can do," was Mother's cheerful suggestion.

"No, there isn't. There isn't one single

thing we can do. We have done everything any one could ever think of doing!" and the voice sounded just as hopeless as the words.

Mother peeled an apple round and round slowly, and dropped it into the pan at her side before she spoke.

"Yes, you have done a good many pleasant things this summer. But there must be something left. Good times are always just around the corner, if we will look for them. Let's try! You and I are going to have the house to ourselves today. Let's invite all the girls who were going to skate to come and spend the whole day with us."

Jane's face brightened, as one by one she called her little friends over the telephone, and one by one came back the replies: "Mother says I may come!"

When she skipped out to report to Mother, the grocer's boy was bumping in at the kitchen door with his usual basket, and, on top of it, a big brown box.

"Looks like rain!" was his greeting, and a broad grin went with it. "That box looks like a box of fruit jars, too—but it isn't! No sir! Not a fruit jar in the lot. It is something 'the boss' sent to the young lady here."

"To me? What can it be?" The grumble was gone out of her voice, and the dismal dumps faded away as Jane started exploring the contents of the box.

"You'll like it, or I miss my guess—almost any girl would," and the grocer's boy went whistling out into the splashing rain.

"Look, Mother, look! A tiny sack of

flour—isn't it cunning? And here's a little can of baking powder! And a package of crackers! And salad dressing—oh, what a cunning thing! And little baby cakes of soap—one, two—oh, a lot of them!"

"Samples," Mother told her, "that Mr. Charles has been kind enough to save for you. I imagine he thought you might like to play store some day—some day when it rained and nobody wanted it to rain, and there wasn't a single thing to do because everything pleasant had already been done a hundred times."

It was a joke not hard to see, and Jane broke into a hearty laugh.

"There's some one now!" Jane scrambled to her feet in answer to the doorbell which was jingling and jangling in the most sociable way.

It was Mary. And before her wet raincoat was spread to dry, Elsa and Nancy arrived; then Frances hopped off the bus at the corner; and, in no time at all, Faye and June came in sight, both tucked under one umbrella.

Such a babel of talking, such a confusion of greetings! But above it all, over and over, sounded Jane's piping voice telling them, "We are going to play store! Mr. Charles sent the cutest samples—little cakes of soap—little packages—"

Into the sweet-smelling kitchen they went pell-mell, and flopped down on the floor about the box. Such a clamor of "ohs" and "ahs," while in and out between all these exclamations ran the making of plans.

"I'm going to rent you my sewing-

room for the day," Mother informed them. "And I'll supply you with all the other things you need, if you will agree to keep shop in a businesslike way. I want you to sell each sample for the price I should have to pay for a large package of the same thing; write your bills accurately; and add them up correctly."

"Of course we will!" Nancy, as the oldest girl, spoke for them all. "I wish we had some money, too!"

Jane made a rush for the library, and brought back a box.

"Look at that!" she cried, excitedly, as she held it up before Nancy.

Cardboard money it was, a whole box of it, with dollars, half-dollars, and all the other pieces looking quite like real coins.

Soon, from the room above, came the clatter of feet and the scraping sound of tables being moved about. Then a dash down the back stairs for the promised supplies—sugar in a jar, rice and beans in cans, a dozen eggs in a small basket, potatoes, turnips, and apples in a larger one, while from the cupboard shelves they were allowed to make a selection of canned goods. No one had much idea what price to put on the different articles until Mother told them.

"I like this way," said Nancy, emphatically. "It's silly to sell everything for five cents and ten cents, when we can just as well use the real price. We aren't babies!"

Up they went, arms full, and down again for another load. Scales, paper sacks, a ball of twine, wrapping paper,

a toy telephone, and, best of all, a very small cash register which really worked and made change for more than twenty dollars.

Nancy was chosen as manager for the day, while the others agreed to take turns being clerks and customers. So the store opened.

"Please help me, Mrs. Smith," said Frances to one of her early visitors. "Wouldn't you just as soon have half-pound of rice as three-quarters? It's so much easier to figure!"

But the manager spoke up sternly, "Give the lady what she asks for. We strive to please."

Both the clerk and the customer gave a rather undignified giggle, and though the clerk was a trifle slow, in the end

Mrs. Smith went away entirely satisfied.

Business was in full swing and it was nearing the noon hour when Mother climbed the back stairs to The Rainy Day Grocery.

"I have been anxious to see your new store," she told the manager, "and I wanted to tell you that I run a Waffle Shop on the floor below. Perhaps your clerks would like to stop in for lunch this rainy day."

Every one was enthusiastic over the prospect of a visit to the Waffle Shop, and more than one trip was made to lean over the stair railing and sniff for odors from the lower floor.

So the store was soon set in order, and hungry and happy, they raced downstairs. Such fun! Such laughing! Such

appetites! But the last waffle eaten, and the last dish put away, no time was lost in getting back to business.

Nancy proved herself a wise manager, and soon there was a great race going on to see which set of clerks could turn over to her the most perfect set of sales slips. Halves and quarters and eighths, which had seemed so bothersome in the forenoon, began to cause less trouble; and excited clerks added up their bills exultantly.

Mother, below stairs, was quite forgotten until late afternoon when she made her appearance carrying a covered basket.

"Mr. Manager," she said, "I am calling at the various stores with my home-made conserves, and I should like to show them to your patrons."

Customers were not long in arriving, and crispy crackers spread with fresh apple conserve proved so popular that each one wanted to buy a glass from her basket.

"These are samples," they were told, "that I am giving out to-day, with the good wishes of the maker."

Long before any one was ready for it, the clock struck five.

"Why, it's raining!" exclaimed Jane, as she stepped out onto the porch to see her friends off.

"Raining? Of course it's raining, you goose!" laughed Nancy. "It's been raining all day."

"My goodness, that's so—but I forgot all about it."

"So did I" and "So did I" and "So did

I" came from the others in a happy chorus.

So Faye and June went round the corner, both tucked under the same umbrella; while Frances hopped on the big bus; Mary went skipping down the street; and Nancy and Elsa ran away in the opposite direction, each holding tight to a wee glass of Mother's golden conserve.

And over and over, as she stood in the doorway watching them disappear, Jane found herself singing to the splashing rain the same song that she and Mary had sung in June:

"There's not a day but holds for us
Some good thing, if we'll take it;
And foul or fine, or shower or shine,
Each day is what we make it."

This story originally appeared in "The Christian Science Monitor."

December
Christmas gifts
F. LILEY-YOUNG

DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

May happy stars shine sweetly down
Upon your home this Christmastide;
And deep within each heart therein
May love, and joy, and peace abide!

HIPPETY - hippety - hippety-hop; hippety-hippety-hop; a little girl with a red tam (that was Jane) and a little girl with a blue tam (that was Mary) went bouncing from one end of the block to the very last house at the other end, carrying a pattern which Mother was sending to Mrs. Shepherd. They waved to Auntie Krum, sitting snugly in her window; they threw kisses to little Alice Ann, next

door, who stood looking out with round eyes of wonder on all that passed by; they gave a bright Good-morning to Mr. Godfrey who tapped along briskly with his shiny cane; they called a Merry Christmas to old Sandy who came solemnly down the street with his marketing basket on his arm; and then they disappeared into Mrs. Shepherd's doorway.

The street was a far different looking affair without these two gay little tams and the two gay little girls beneath them. But one had scarcely time to miss them when there they were again—Hippety-hippety-hippety-hop; hippety-hippety-hop; and in between hops trying to take the smallest possible bites out of the big sugar cookies that came with them out from Mrs. Shepherd's door.

"What is the Baby Fold, anyway?"

came from Jane, between hops and bites.

"Well," and Mary's reply was slow because of the cookie and hopping, but more because she was puzzling this question about in her own thought, "I don't exactly know—I just sort of know. It's a place where there are a great many babies."

"We'll ask Mother!" confidently suggested Jane. And that is just what they did.

"The Baby Fold?" echoed Mother, in surprise. "Well, I don't know just why, but I supposed of course you knew all about it. You've seen it often, I think, in our drives—a lovely old home out at the edge of town."

They listened with deepest interest while she told them about the place—that it was a home where darling babies,

who for one reason or another had no one to care for them, could be kept until a happy home was found.

"But Mrs. Shepherd is making cookies for them, Mother. Why is she doing that?"

Then followed further explanations that there was not always enough money at the home to keep things running easily, and that many people sent cookies and apples and necessary things to help along.

"And," said Mother, "I can't tell you how long I've been thinking of baking cookies for those blessed babies, and I haven't done it yet." She gave an inquiring glance at the clock, then clapped her hands together in a way that brought a thrill of excitement to Jane and Mary.

"Isn't it splendid? I can just spare the

time this morning. I'm so glad you made me think of it. And they will go out for a Christmas greeting!"

"Oh, Mother, may we help?" was Jane's question, and "Oh, please, may we?" begged Mary, eager to have a part in this loving work.

In no time at all the sweet fragrance of freshly baked cookies filled the kitchen, and on the wide table were being spread out the roundest and most toothsome sugar cookies. Half-way through the task, Jane suggested, "Wouldn't it have been nice to have made gingerbread men for them? Why didn't we think of that?"

"But they use only plain cookies, for many of them are just the very tiniest tots, you know. Still, why couldn't we use the gingerbread-man cutter and call

them Little Boy Blue or Tommy Tucker, or something like that?" Mother brought the beloved cutter triumphantly from the pantry.

So the table was finished out with rows of fat little men covered over with glistening sugar. Long before the work was finished, Mary had asked, "Isn't there something Jane and I could make all by ourselves for the babies?"

As she cut the little men and lifted them carefully into the pan, Mother puckered her forehead into wrinkles of deep thought. Then a smile broke over her face and the wrinkles all ran away.

"Indeed there is. I know the very nicest thing. You will enjoy doing it, too."

"What is it, Mother?" and Jane almost upset a whole pan of little men who

were coming warm and sweet from the oven.

"Scrap-books, or rather picture books," Mother told her, "big ones made from bright, pretty pictures. If you will get started now, you can soon get them made and they can go out with our cookies."

First, there was a stack of old magazines to be gone through.

"Only colored pictures," Mother advised them, "for babies love color. Only large ones, for they are not old enough to care for small objects. And only happy ones—by all means, the very happiest ones you can find."

Then she left them to their work. But whether it was play or work, Mother thought a wiser head than hers would have to decide.

"After all," she said to herself, as she wiped her big rolling-pin dry, "perhaps play is just work that we like to do. And then, too, maybe work is just play that we haven't learned to enjoy," she thought again as she tucked the rolling-pin into its corner to await another baking day.

Although they had thought at the start that it would be hard to find the sort of pictures Mother wanted, Jane and Mary soon found it quite easy. The larger magazines had such beautiful ladies on their covers, such fascinating babies and groups of children, such wonderful ships, such lovely flowers! Even a fat Santa Claus was discovered, which they instantly decided should be used on the front of one cover. Beside these, there were no end of smaller things to be

tucked in between. It was great fun to cut them all out.

From somewhere in her magical sewing-room, Mother brought a roll of cambric of different colors, left over from a day long ago when she had made just such a book for Big Sister. The width of the material was about twenty-seven inches, so she cut it into pieces fourteen inches long. Four such pieces would make a book of the right size, she told them. They would use the different colors together—one strip of orange, one yellow, one red, and one blue. And cutting them, she laid them all together to show that such an arrangement would make two pages of each color when they were sewed fast together down the center.

While Jane and Mary played house-

keepers and washed the lunch dishes, Mother made them a pot of paste.

"Library paste is entirely too expensive for such work," was her advice. "It takes too much of it, so we will make some common paste out of flour."

Mary was so interested in this process that she made a little recipe out of the directions Mother gave her, to take home for her own use. First, one-fourth cup of flour was put into a pan, and to that was added one-half cup of cold water and a tablespoon of salt. This was stirred until not a lump could be found, and then, over it, was poured one cup of boiling water. It was cooked carefully over the fire for a few minutes, with constant stirring, until it bubbled up all clear and pasty-looking.

"We will use it just as soon as it gets

cool enough to handle," said Mother, "for if it stands too long, it is more difficult to spread."

Soon they were at work in the library, with small pieces of soft cloth to use instead of brushes when spreading the paste, plenty of large cloths for smoothing down the pictures, as well as wet ones for cleaning sticky hands.

Each piece of cambric was worked on separately, and there was no end of happy discussion as to the arrangement of the pictures. When all were done, they were rather humpy-looking affairs, damp in many spots, but Mother made them right, in the funniest way—at least Mary and Jane thought it was funny. She ironed them—ironed them flat and dry; and what a difference it did make in their appearance!

"Almost as great a difference as it makes in little girls to have on smoothly-ironed dresses instead of mussy, crumpled-up ones!" she laughed.

All that needed to be done to finish the books was to lay the sheets one on top of the other and, with several strands of yarn, sew them together down the middle with long running stitches. At the top and bottom, Mother tied on two fat yarn tassels—and there they were, two beautiful books that baby hands could not tear, filled with pictures that would give joy for many a day.

And long before the twilight came, Mother and Mary and Jane had gone in the car through the streets of the town, past holly wreaths and Christmas trees, and windows filled with sparkling

things, out to the Baby Fold with their precious gifts.

It was wide-awake time, and from the windows peeped baby faces as round and sweet as rosebuds peeping from a rose arbor. Then the kindest, gentlest lady thanked them over and over for their basket and promised that each dear baby should have a fat sugar man for Christmas supper.

"Well!" ejaculated Mary, after they had driven a few blocks toward home, "I thought I was going to feel all sorry and like crying about those babies, but goodness me! Instead of having no mother, it looks to me as if they have a lot of mothers! Why, they are as happy as can be!"

"After all," Mother answered her,

with a bright smile, "there is love enough to go around, isn't there? You see, we sent some love into their home, and other people will do the same—"

"Mrs. Shepherd is sending some," interrupted Jane.

"She surely is," agreed Mother. "Love goes with every one of her cookies, I know that. So, by little and little, there will be all the love the babies need. Only we must not forget, of course, that they need love all the year round, as well as at Christmas time."

"May we take cookies again?" chirped Jane, and "May we?" echoed Mary.

"Any time you find love enough in your hearts to help me make them," Mother assured them.

And as they drove back past the holly

wreaths and Christmas trees, through the evening lights, there was a beautiful feeling of gladness and content deep in the heart of each little girl.

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